Marie Schwarz

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THE

MODERN GRISELDA.

A TALE.

BY

MISS EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION, BELINDA, CASTLE RACKRENT, HISTORY OF IRISH BULLS, LETTERS FOR LITERARY LADIES, POPULAR TALES, &c.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

"And since in man right reason bears the sway,
"Let that frail thing, weak woman, have her way."

POPE.

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THE

MODERN GRISELDA.

CHAPTER I.

" Blest as th' immortal Gods is he,
" The youth who fondly sits by thee,
" Who sees, and hears thee all the while,
" Softly speak and sweetly smile."

Is not this ode set to music, my dear Griselda? said the happy bridegroom to his bride.

Yes, surely, my dear, did you never hear it?

Never, and I am glad of it, for I shall have the pleasure of hearing it for the first time, from you, my love—

Will you be so kind as to play it for me?

Most willingly, said Griselda, with an enchanting smile; but I am afraid that I shall not be able to do it justice, added she, as she sat down to her harp, and threw her white arm across the chords.

Charming! Thank you, my love, said the bridegroom, who had listened with enthusiastic devotion—Will you let me hear it once more?

The complaisant bride repeated the strain.

Thank you, my dear love, repeated her husband. This time he omitted the word "*charming*"—She missed it, and pouting prettily, said,

I never can play any thing so well the second

second time as the first—She paused, but as no compliment ensued, she continued in a more pettish tone—— "And for that reason, I do hate to be made to play any thing twice over."

I did not know that, my dearest love, or I would not have asked you to do it, but I am the more obliged to you for your ready compliance.

Obliged!—Oh my dear, I am sure you could not be the least obliged to me, for I know I played it horridly, I hate flattery.

I am convinced of that, my dear, and therefore I never flatter: you know I did not say that you played as well the last time as the first, did I?

No, I did not say you did, cried Griselda, and her colour rose as she

spoke; she tuned her harp with some precipitation——"This harp is terribly out of tune."

Is it? I did not perceive it.

Did not you indeed? I am sorry for that.

Why so, my dear?

Because, my dear, I own that I would rather have had the blame thrown on my harp than upon myself.

Blame! my love!—But I threw no blame either on you or your harp. I cannot recollect saying even a syllable that implied blame.

No, my dear, you did not *say* a syllable; but in some cases the silence of those we love is the worst, the most mortifying species of blame.

The tears came into Griselda's beautiful eyes.

My sweet love, said he, how can you let such a trifle affect you so much?

Nothing is a trifle to me which concerns those I love, said Griselda.—— Her husband kissed away the pearly drops which rolled over her vermeil-tinctured cheeks. My love, said he, this is having too much sensibility.

Yes, I own I have too much sensibility, said she, too much, a great deal too much for my own happiness— Nothing ever can be a trifle to me, which marks the decline of the affection of those who are most dear to me.

The tenderest protestations of undiminished and unalterable affection, could not for some time reassure this timid sensibility: but at length the lady

suffered herself to be comforted, and with a languid smile, said, that she hoped she was mistaken, that her fears were perhaps unreasonable—that she prayed to Heaven they might in future prove groundless.——

A few weeks afterwards her husband unexpectedly met with Mr. Granby, a friend, of whose company he was particularly fond; he invited him home to dinner, and was talking over past times in all the gayety and innocence of his heart, when suddenly his wife rose and left the room.—As her absence appeared to him long, and as he had begged his friend to postpone *an excellent story* till her return, he went to her apartment and called Griselda! ——Griselda my love!——No Griselda

selda answered—He searched for her in vain in every room in the house—at last in an alcove in the garden, he found the fair dissolved in tears——

Good Heavens! my dear Griselda, what can be the matter?

A melancholy,—not to say sullen silence was maintained by his dear Griselda, till this question had been reiterated in all the possible tones of fond solicitude and alarm; at last in broken sentences she replied——

That she saw he did not love her—never had loved her—that she had now but too much reason to be convinced that all her fears were real, not imaginary. That her presentiments, alas! never deceived her! That she

was the most miserable woman on earth.

Her husband's unfeigned astonishment she seemed to consider as an aggravation of her woes, and it was an additional insult to plead ignorance of his offence.

If he did not understand her feelings, it was impossible, it was needless to explain them. He must have lost all sympathy with her—all tenderness for her, if he did not know what had passed in her mind.

The man stood in stupid innocence: Provoked to speak more plainly, the lady exclaimed

Unfeeling! cruel! barbarous man! —Have not you this whole day been trying your utmost skill to torment me

to

to death? And proud of your success, now you come to enjoy your triumph.

Success!—Triumph!

Yes triumph!—I see it in your eyes —it is in vain to deny it—All this I owe to your friend Mr. Granby: why he should be my enemy, I! who never injured him, or any body living, in thought, word, or deed—why he should be my enemy!—

Enemy! my love, this is the strangest fancy! Why should you imagine that he is your enemy?

He *is* my enemy, nobody shall ever convince me of the contrary, he has wounded me in the tenderest point, and in the basest manner, has not he done his utmost, in the most artful, insidious way, even before my face, to

persuade

persuade you that you were a thousand times happier when you were a bachelor than you are now—than you ever have been since you married me?

O my dear Griselda! you totally misunderstand him, such a thought never entered his mind.

Pardon me, I know him better than you do.

But I have known him ever since I was a child.

That is the very reason you cannot judge of him as well as I can—how could you judge of character when you were a child?

But now that I am a man—

Now that you are a man you are prejudiced in his favour by all the associations of your childhood—All those

associations,

associations, continued the fair one, renewing her tears, all those early associations which are stronger than every other species of affection—All those associations which I never *can* have in your mind, which ever must act against me, and which no merit, if I had any merit, no tenderness, no fidelity, no fondness of mine can ever hope to balance in the heart of the man I love.

My dearest Griselda! be reasonable, and do not torment yourself and me for no earthly purpose about these associations—Really it is ridiculous, come dry these useless tears, let me beseech you, my love. You do not know how much pain they give me, unreasonable as they are.

At

At these words they flowed more bitterly.

Nay my love, I conjure you to compose yourself, and return to the company; you do not know how long you have been away, and I too, we shall be missed, we shall make ourselves ridiculous.

If it be ridiculous to love, I shall be ridiculous all my life, I am sorry you think me so, I knew it would come to this, I must bear it, if I can, said Griselda——Only be so kind to excuse me from returning to the company to night, indeed I am not fit, I am not able, say that I am not well, indeed my love you may say so with truth—Tell your friend that I have a terrible head-ache, and that I am gone to bed,

but

but not to rest, added she in a lower and more plaintive tone as she drew her hand from her husband's, and in spite of all his entreaties retired to her room, with an air of heart broken resignation.

Whoever has had the felicity to be beloved by such a wife as our Griselda, must have felt how much the charms of beauty are heightened by the anguish of sensibility—Even in the moment when a husband is most tormented by her caprices, he feels that there is something so amiable, so flattering to his vanity in their source, that he cannot complain of the killing pleasure. On the contrary, he grows fonder of his dear tormentor; he folds closer to him this pleasing bosom ill.

Griselda

Griselda perceived the effects, and felt the whole extent of the power of sensibility; she had too much prudence however, at once to wear out the excitability of a husband's heart, she knew that the influence of tears, potent as it is, might in time cease to be irresistible, unless aided by the magic of smiles; she knew the power of contrast even in charms; she believed the poets, who certainly understand these things, and who assure us that the very existence of Love depends on this blest vicissitude. Convinced, or seemingly convinced of the folly of that fond melancholy in which she persisted for a week, she next appeared all radiant with joy; and she had reason to be delighted by the effect which this pro

duced

duced. Her husband, who had not yet been long enough her husband to cease to be her lover, had suffered much from the obstinacy of her sorrow, his spirits had sunk, he had become silent, he had been even seen to stand motionless with his arms folded; he was in this attitude when she approached and smiled upon him in all her glory. He breathed, he lived, he moved, he spoke—Not the influence of the sun on the statue of Memnon was ever more exhilarating.

Let any candid female say, or if she will not say, imagine, what she should have felt at this moment in Griselda's place—How intoxicating to human vanity to be possessed of such powers

powers of enchantment!—How difficult to refrain from their exercise!—How impossible to believe in their finite duration.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"*Some* hope a lover by their faults to win,
"As spots on ermine beautify the skin."

WHEN Griselda thought that her husband had long enough enjoyed his new existence, and that there was danger of his forgetting the taste of sorrow, she changed her tone——One day, when he had not returned home exactly at the appointed minute, she received him with a frown; such as would have made even Mars himself recoil, if Mars could have beheld such a frown upon the brow of his Venus.

Dinner has been kept waiting for you this hour, my dear.

I am very sorry for it; but why did you wait, my dear? I am really very sorry I am so late, but (looking at his watch) It is only half past six by me.

It is seven by me.

They presented their watches to each other, he, in an apologetical, she in a reproachful, attitude.

I rather think you are too fast my dear, said the gentleman.

I am very sure you are too slow my dear, said the lady.

My watch never loses a minute in the four and twenty hours, said he.

Nor mine a second, said she.

I have reason to believe I am right, my love, said the husband mildly.

Reason!

Reason! exclaimed the wife, astonished.

What reason can you possibly have to believe you are right, when I tell you, I am morally certain you are wrong, my love.

My only reason for doubting it is, that I set my watch by the sun to day.

The sun must be wrong then, cried the lady hastily—You need not laugh; for I know what I am saying—the variation, the declination, must be allowed for in computing it with the clock. Now you know perfectly well what I mean, though you will not explain it for me, because you are conscious I am in the right.

Well, my dear, if *you* are conscious

of it, that is sufficient—We will not dispute any more about such a trifle.

Are they bringing up dinner?

If they know that you are come in; but I am sure I cannot tell whether they do or not—Pray, my dear Mrs. Nettleby, cried the lady, turning to a female friend, and still holding her watch in hand—What o'clock is it by you? There is nobody in the world hates disputing about trifles so much as I do; but I own I do love to convince people that I am in the right.

Mrs. Nettleby's watch had stopped —How provoking! Vexed at having no immediate means of convincing people that she was in the right, our heroine consoled herself by proceeding to criminate her husband, not in this particular

particular instance where he pleaded guilty, but upon the general charge of being always late for dinner, which he strenuously denied.

There is something in the species of reproach, which advances thus triumphantly from particulars to generals, peculiarly offensive to every reasonable and susceptible mind: And there is something in the general charge of being always late for dinner, which the punctuality of man's nature cannot easily endure, especially if he be hungry. We should humbly advise our female friends to forbear exposing a husband's patience to this trial, or at least to temper it with much fondness, else mischief will infallibly ensue. For the first time Griselda

saw her husband angry; but she recovered him by saying, in a softened tone——

My love, you must be sensible that I can have but one reason for being so impatient for your return home—If I liked your company less, I should not complain so much of your want of punctuality.

Finding that this speech had the desired effect, it was afterwards repeated with variations, whenever her husband stayed from home to enjoy any species of amusement, or to gratify any of his friends. When he betrayed symptoms of impatience under this constraint, the expostulations became more urgent, if not more forcible.

Indeed, my dear, I take it rather unkindly

kindly of you, that you pay so little attention to my feelings——

I see I am of no consequence to you *now ;* I find every body's society is preferred to mine ; it was not always so—Well ! it is what I might have expected——

Heigho !——Heigho !——

Griselda's sighs were still persuasive, and her husband, notwithstanding that he felt the restraints which daily multiplied upon his time and upon his personal liberty becoming irksome, had not the barbarity to give pain to the woman by whom he was so tenderly beloved : He did not consider that in this case, as well as in many others, apparent mercy is real cruelty. The more this monopolising humor of his

wife's was indulged, the more insatiable it became—Every person, every thing but herself, was to be excluded from his heart; and when this sole patent for pleasure was granted to her, she became rather careless in its exercise, as those are apt to do who fear no competitors. In proportion as her endeavours to please abated, her expectations of being adored increased: the slightest word of blame, the most remote hint that any thing in her conduct, manners, or even dress, could be altered for the better, was the signal for battle, or tears.

One night she wept for an hour, and debated for two, about an alteration in her head-dress, which her husband unluckily happened to say made it more

more becoming. *More becoming!* implied, that it was before unbecoming. She recollected the time when every thing she wore was becoming in somebody's eyes—but that time, alas! was completely past; and she only wished that she could forget that it had ever been.

"To have been happy, is additional misery."

This misery may appear comic to some people, but it certainly was not so to our heroine's unfortunate husband. It was in vain, that in mitigation of his offence he pleaded total want of knowledge in the arcana of the toilette—absolute inferiority of taste—and a willing submission to the decrees of fashion.

This

This submission was called indifference—this calmness construed into contempt. He stood convicted of having said, that the lady's dress was unbecoming—she was certain that he thought more than he said, and that every thing about her was grown disagreeable to him.

It was in vain he represented, that his affection had not been created, and could not be annihilated by such trifles; that it rested on the solid basis of esteem.

Esteem! cried his wife—that is the unkindest stroke of all! When a man begins to talk of esteem, there is an end of love.

To illustrate this position, the fair one, as well as the disorder of her mind

mind would permit, entered into a refined disquisition full of all the metaphysics of gallantry, which proved that love—genuine love—is an ætherial essence—a union of souls—regulated by none of those formal principles, and founded upon none of those vulgar moral qualities, on which friendship, and the other connexions of society depend. Far, far above the jurisdiction of reason, true love creates perfect sympathy in taste, and an absolute identity of opinion upon all subjects, physical, metaphysical, moral, political, and economic. After having thus established her theory, her practice was wonderfully consistent, and she reasonably expected from her husband, the most exact conformity to her

her principles—of course, his five senses, and his understanding, were to be identified with hers. If he saw, heard, felt, or understood differently from her, he did not—could not love her. Once she was offended by his liking white better than black; at another time she was angry with him for loving the taste of mushrooms. One winter she quarrelled with him for not admiring the touch of satin, and one summer she was jealous of him for listening to the song of a blackbird. Then, because he could not prefer to all other odours the smell of jessamine, she was ready "to die of a rose in aromatic pain." The domain of taste, in the more enlarged sense of the word, became a glorious field of battle, and afforded

afforded subjects of inextinguishable war. Our heroine was accomplished, and knew how to make all her accomplishments, and her knowledge, of use. As she was mistress not only of the pencil, and of all "the cant of criticism," she had infinite advantages in the wordy war. From the *beau ideal*, to the choice of a snuffer-dish, all came within her province, and was to be submitted, without appeal, to her instinctive sense of moral order.—Happy fruits of knowledge!—Happy those, who can thus enlarge their intellectual dominion, and can vary eternally the dear delight of giving pain. The range of opinion was still more ample than the province of taste, affording scope for all the joys of assertion,

sertion, and declamation—for the opposing of learned and unlearned authorities,—for the quoting the opinions of friends—counting voices instead of arguments—wondering at the absurdity of those who can be of a different way of thinking—appealing to the judgment of the whole world—or resting perfectly satisfied with her own. Sometimes the most important, sometimes the most trivial, and seemingly uninteresting subjects gave exercise to Griselda's powers, and in all cases being entirely of her opinion, was the only satisfactory proof of love.

Our heroine knew how, with able generalship, to take advantage of time and situation. Just before the birth of their first child, a dispute arose between

tween the husband and wife, concerning public and private education, which from its vehemence, alarmed the gentleman into a perfect conviction that he was in the wrong. Scarcely had Griselda gained this point, when a question arose at the tea-table, respecting the Chinese method of making tea. It was doubted by some of the company, whether it was made in a tea-pot, or a tea-cup. Griselda gave her opinion loudly for the tea-pot—her lord and master, inclined to the tea-cup—and as neither of them had been in China, they could debate without fear of coming to a conclusion. The subject seemed at first insignificant, but the lady's method of managing it supplied all deficiencies, and

roused

roused all the passions of human nature on one side or the other. Victory hung doubtful; but our heroine won the day, by taking time into the account.—Her adversary was in a hurry to go to the wedding of one of his friends, and quitted the field of battle.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

" Self valuing Fancy, highly crested Pride,
" Strong sovereign Will, and some desire to chide."

THERE are, says Dr. Johnson, a thousand familiar disputes which reason can never decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous—cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. **** Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning, all the detail of a domestic day.

Our heroine made a double advan-

tage of this passage; for she regularly reasoned where logic was ridiculous, and could not be prevailed upon to listen to reason, when it might have been useful—She substituted her *will* most frequently for arguments, and often opposed it to her husband's, in order to give him the merit of sacrificing his wishes. When he wanted to read, she suddenly wished to walk; when he wished to walk, she was immersed in her studies. When he was busy, she was talkative—when he was eager to hear her converse, she was inclined to be silent. The company that he liked, she disliked; the public amusements that she most frequented, were those of which he least approved. This species of wilfulness was the strongest proof of her

solicitude

solicitude about his good opinion—"She could not bear," she said, "that "he should consider her as a child, "who was not able to govern herself." —"She could not believe that a man "had confidence in her, unless he "proved it by leaving her at liberty to "decide and act for herself."

Sometimes she receded, sometimes she advanced in her claims; but without marking the daily ebbs and flows of her humour, it is sufficient to observe, that it continually encroached upon her husband's indulgence—She soon insisted upon being *consulted*, that is obeyed, in affairs which did not immediately come under the cognizance of her sex—politics inclusive. This apparently exorbitant love of power, was

veiled under the most affectionate humility.

O my Love! I know you despise my abilities; you think these things above the comprehension of poor women. I know I am but your plaything after all; you cannot consider me for a moment as your equal or your friend—I see that!—You talk of these things to your friend Mr. Granby—I am not worthy to hear them.—Well, I am sure I have no ambition, except to possess the confidence of the man I love.

The lady forgot that she had, upon a former occasion, considered a profession of esteem from her husband as an insult, and that according to her definition of true-love, esteem was incompatible with its existence.

Tacitus

Tacitus remarks, that it is common with princes to will contradictories; in this characteristic they have the honor to resemble some of the fair sex, as well as all spoiled children. Having every feasible wish gratified, they are obliged to wish for what is impossible, for want of something to desire or to do—They are compelled to cry for the moon, or for new worlds to conquer.—Our heroine having now attained the summit of human glory and happiness, and feeling almost as much ennui as was expressed by the conqueror of the world, yawned one morning as she sat tête-à-tête with her husband, and said—

I wish I knew what was the matter with me this morning—Why do you

keep the newspaper all to yourself, my dear?

Here it is for you, my dear, I have finished it.

I humbly thank you for giving it to me when you have done with it—I hate stale news—Is there any thing in the paper? for I cannot be at the trouble of hunting it.

Yes, my dear, there are the marriages of two of our friends—

Who? Who?

Your friend the widow Nettleby, to her cousin John Nettleby.

Mrs. Nettleby! Lord! but why did you tell me?

Because you asked me, my dear.

Oh but it is a hundred times pleasanter to read the paragraph one's self

—One

—One loses all the pleasure of the surprise by being told—Well! whose was the other marriage?

Oh, my dear, I will not tell you—I will leave you the pleasure of the surprise.

But you see I cannot find it—How provoking you are, my dear! Do pray tell it me.

Our friend Mr. Granby.

Mr. Granby!—Dear! Why did not you make me guess? I should have guessed him directly: But why do you call him our friend? I am sure he is no friend of mine, nor ever was; I took an aversion to him, as you may remember, the very first day I saw him; I am sure he is no friend of mine.

I am sorry for it, my dear—but I hope you will go and see Mrs. Granby.

Not I indeed, my dear—Who was she?

Miss Cooke.

Cooke!—but there are so many Cookes——Can't you distinguish her any way?—Has she no christian name?

Emma, I think—yes, Emma.

Emma Cooke!—No;—it cannot be my friend Emma Cooke—for I am sure she was cut out for an old maid.

This lady seems to me to be cut out for a good wife——

May be so—I am sure I'll never go to see her—Pray, my dear, how came you to see so much of her?

I have seen very little of her my dear

dear—I only saw her two or three times before she was married.

Then, my dear, how could you decide that she is cut out for a good wife? —I am sure you could not judge of her by seeing her only two or three times, and before she was married.

Indeed, my love, that is a very just observation.

I understand that compliment perfectly, and thank you for it, my dear —I must own I can bear any thing better than irony.

Irony! my dear, I was perfectly in earnest.

Yes, yes; in earnest—so I perceive —I may naturally be dull of apprehension, but my feelings are quick enough; I comprehend you too well; Yes—it is impos-

impossible to judge of a woman before marriage, or to guess what sort of a wife she will make. I presume you speak from experience; you have been disappointed yourself, and repent your choice.

My dear, what did I say that was like this! Upon my word I meant no such thing; I really was not thinking of you in the least.

No—you never think of me now: I can easily believe that you were not thinking of me in the least.

But I said that only to prove to you that I could not be thinking ill of you my dear.

But I would rather that you thought ill of me, than that you did not think of me at all.

Well,

Well, my dear, said her husband, laughing, I will even think ill of you, if that will please you.

Do you laugh at me? cried she, bursting into tears. When it comes to this, I am wretched indeed! Never man laughed at the woman he loved! As long as you had the slightest remains of love for me, you could not make me an object of derision: ridicule and love are incompatible; absolutely incompatible. Well, I have done my best, my very best to make you happy, but in vain. I see I am not *cut out* to be a good wife. Happy, happy Mrs. Granby!

Happy, I hope sincerely, that she will be with my friend, but my happiness must depend on you, my love: so for my

my sake, if not for your own, be composed, and do not torment yourself with such fancies.

I do wonder, cried our heroine, starting from her seat, whether this Mrs. Granby is really that Miss Emma Cooke. I'll go and see her directly; see her I must.

I am heartily glad of it, my dear; for I am sure a visit to his wife, will give my friend Granby real pleasure.

I promise you, my dear, I do not go to give him pleasure, or you either; but to satisfy my own—*curiosity*.

The rudeness of this speech would have been intolerable to her husband, if it had not been for a certain hesitation in the emphasis with which she pronounced the word curiosity, which

left

left him in doubt as to her real motive.

Jealousy is sometimes thought to be a proof of love; and in this point of view, must not all its caprices, absurdities, and extravagancies be graceful, amiable, and gratifying?

A few days after Griselda had satisfied her curiosity, she thus, in the presence of her husband, began to vent her spleen:

For heaven's sake, dear Mrs. Nettleby, cried she, addressing herself to the new-married widow, who came to return her wedding visit;—for pity's sake, dear Mrs. Nettleby, can you, or any body else tell me, what possessed Mr. Granby to marry Emma Cooke?

I am

I am sure I cannot tell, for I have not seen her yet.

You will be less able to tell after you have seen her, and less still after you have heard her.

What then, she is neither a wit nor a beauty! I'm quite surprised at that; for I thought to be sure, Mr. Granby, who is such a judge and such a critic, and so nice about female manners, would not have been content without something very extraordinary.

Nothing can be more ordinary.

Astonishing! but I am quite tired of being astonished at marriages! One sees such strange matches every day, I am resolved never to be surprised at any thing: who *can*, that lives in the world? But really now I am surprised

at

at Mr. Granby. What! is she nothing?

Nothing: absolutely nothing: a cypher: a nonentity.

Now really? you do not tell me so, said Mrs. Nettleby: Well, I am so disappointed: for I always resolved to take example by Mr. Granby's wife.

I would rather that she should take warning by me, said Griselda, laughing: But to be candid, I must tell you that to some people's taste, she is a pattern wife; a perfect Grizzle. She and I should have changed names—or characters. Which, my dear? cried she, appealing to her husband.

Not names, my dear, answered he.

The conversation might here have ended happily, but unluckily our heroine could

could not be easily satisfied before Mrs. Nettleby, to whom she was proud of shewing her conjugal ascendancy.

My dear, said she to her husband, à-propos to pattern wives; you have read Chaucer's Tales. Do you seriously like or dislike the real, original, old Griselda?

It is so long since I have seen her, that I cannot tell: replied he.

Then, my dear, you must read the story over again, and tell me without evasion.

And if he could read it before Mrs. Granby and me, what a compliment that would be to one bride, added the malicious Mrs. Nettleby; and what a lesson for another!

O it must be so! it must be so! cried Griselda.

Griselda. I will ask her here on purpose to a reading party; and you, my dear Mrs. Nettleby, will come for your lesson. You, my love, who read so well; and who, I am sure, will be delighted to pay a compliment to your favourite, Mrs. Granby,—you will read, and I will—weep. On what day shall it be? Let me see: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I'm engaged: but Sunday is only a card-party at home, I can put that off: Then Sunday let it be.

Sunday, I am unluckily engaged, my dear, said her husband.

Engaged? O nonsense! You have no engagements of any consequence; and when I put off a *card-party* on purpose to have the pleasure of hearing

you read, oblige me, my love, for once.

My love, to oblige you, I will do anything.

Griselda cast a triumphant glance at Mrs. Nettleby, which said as plainly as a look could say, "You see how I rule him!"

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

" Feels every vanity in fondness lost,
" And asks no power but that of pleasing
" most."

On Sunday evening, a large company assembled at our heroine's summons. They were all seated in due form; the reader with his book open, and waiting for the arrival of the bride, for whom a conspicuous place was destined, where the spectators, and especially Mrs. Nettleby and our Griselda, could enjoy a full view of her countenance.

Lord bless me! it is getting late; I am afraid—I am really afraid Mrs. Granby will not come.

The ladies had time to discuss, who and what she was; as she had lived in the country, few of them had seen, or could tell any thing about her, but our heroine circulated her opinion in whispers, and every one was prepared to laugh at *the pattern wife, the original Griselda revived,* as Mrs. Nettleby sarcastically called her.

Mrs. Granby was announced. The buz was hushed, and the titter suppressed; affected gravity appeared in every countenance, and all eyes turned with malicious curiosity upon the bride as she entered. The timidity of Emma's first appearance was so free, both from aukwardness and affectation, that it interested at least every gentleman present in her favor. Surrounded

by

by strangers, but quite unsuspicious that they were prepared to consider her as an object of ridicule or satire, she won her way to the lady of the house, to whom she addressed herself as to a friend.

Is not she quite a different person from what you had expected? whispered one of the ladies to her neighbour, as Emma passed. Her manner seemed to solicit indulgence, rather than to provoke envy. "She was very sorry to find, that the company had been waiting for her; she had been detained by the sudden illness of Mr. Granby's mother."

Whilst Emma was making this apology, some of the audience observed, that she had a remarkably sweet voice;

others discovered that there was something extremely feminine in her person. A gentleman, who saw that she was distressed, at the idea of being seated in the conspicuous place to which she was destined by the lady of the house, got up, and offered his seat, which she most thankfully accepted.

Oh, my dear Mrs. Granby, I cannot possibly allow you to sit there, cried the lady of the house. You must have the honours of the day, added she, seizing Emma's hand to conduct her to the *place of honour*. Pray excuse me, said Mrs. Granby, honours are so little suited to me: I am perfectly well here.

But with that window *at your back*, my dear Madam! said Mrs. Nettleby: I do

I do not feel the slightest breath of air. But perhaps I crowd these ladies.

Not in the least, not in the least, said the ladies, who were on each side of her; they were won, by the irresistible gentleness of Emma's manner. Our heroine was vexed to be obliged to give up her point, and relinquishing Mrs. Granby's hand, returned to her own seat, and said in a harsh tone to her husband,

Well! my dear, if we are to have any reading to night, you had better begin.

The reading began, and Emma was so completely absorbed, that she did not perceive that most of the audience were intent upon her. Those who act any part, may be ridiculous in the

playing it, but those are safe from the utmost malignity of criticism, who are perfectly unconscious that they have any part to perform. Emma had been abashed at her first appearance in an assembly of strangers, and concerned by the idea that she had kept them waiting; but as soon as this embarrassment passed over, her manners resumed their natural ease; a degree of ease, which surprised her judges; and which arose from the persuasion, that she was not of sufficient consequence to attract attention. Our heroine was provoked by the sight of this insolent tranquillity, and was determined that it should not long continue. The reader came to the promise, which Gualtherus exacts from his bride.

"Swear,

" Swear, that with ready will and honest heart,
" Like or dislike, without regret or art;
" In presence or alone, by night or day,
" All that I will you fail not to obey;
" All I intend to forward, that you seek,
" Nor ever once object to what I speak.
" Nor yet in part alone, my wish fulfil;
" Nor though you do it, do it with ill-will;
" Nor with a forced compliance half refuse;
" And acting duty, all the merit lose.
" To strict obedience, add a willing grace,
" And let your soul be painted in your face;
" No reasons given, and no pretences sought;
" To swerve in deed, or word, in look, or
" thought."

Well ladies! cried the modern Griselda; what do you think of this?

Shrill exclamations of various vehemence, expressed with one accord the sentiments, or rather feelings of almost

all

all the married ladies, who were present.

Abominable! Intolerable! Insufferable! Horrible! I would rather have seen the man perish at my feet! I would rather have died; I would have remained unmarried all my life, rather than have submitted to such terms.

A few young unmarried ladies, who had not spoken, or, who had not been heard to speak in the din of tongues, were appealed to, by the gentlemen next them. They could not be prevailed upon, to pronounce any distinct opinion: they qualified, and hesitated, and softened, and equivocated, and, "were not positively able to judge, for really they had never thought upon the subject."

Upon the whole, however, it was evident, that they did not betray that natural horror, which pervaded the more experienced matrons. All agreed that the terms were "hard terms," and ill expressed; some added, that only love could persuade a woman to submit to them. And some still more sentimental maidens, in a lower voice, were understood to say, that as nothing is impossible to Cupid, they might be induced to such submission; but that it must be by a degree of love, which they solemnly declared they had never felt or could imagine, as yet.

For my part, cried the modern Griselda, I would sooner have lived an old maid to the days of Methusalem, than

than have been so mean as to have married any man on earth upon such terms. But I know there are people, who can never think "marriage dear-bought." My dear Mrs. Granby, we have not yet heard your opinion, and we should have had yours first, as bride.

I forgot that I was bride, said Emma. Forgot! Is it possible! cried Mrs. Nettleby; now this is an excess of modesty, of which I have no notion.

But for which Mr. Granby, continued our heroine, turning to Mr. Granby, who at this moment entered the room, ought to make his best bow. Here is your lady, sir, who has just assured us that she forgot she was a bride; bow to this exquisite humility.

Exquisite

Exquisite vanity! cried Mr. Granby, she knows

"How much the wife is dearer than the bride."

She will be a singularly happy woman if she knows that, this time twelvemonth, replied our heroine, darting a reproachful look at her silent husband. In the mean time, do let us hear Mrs. Granby speak for herself; I must have her opinion of Griselda's promise, to obey her lord right or wrong, in all things, no reasons given, to submit in deed, and word, and look, and thought. If Mrs. Granby tells us that is her theory, we must all reform our practice.

Every eye was fixed upon Emma, and every ear was impatient for her answer.

I should

I should never have imagined, said she, smiling, that any person's practice could be influenced by my theory, especially as I have no theory.

No more humility, my dear; if you have no theory, you have an opinion of your own, I hope, and we must have a distinct answer to this simple question. Would you have made the promise that was required from Griselda?

No; answered Emma, distinctly no; for I could never have loved or esteemed the man, who required such a promise.

Disconcerted by this answer, which was the very reverse of what she expected, amazed at the modest self-possession with which the timid Emma spoke,

spoke, and vexed by the symptoms of approbation which Emma's words and voice excited, our heroine called upon her husband, in a more than usually authoritative tone, and bid him—read on.

He obeyed, Emma became again absorbed in the story, and her countenance showed how much she felt all its beauties, and all its pathos. Emma did all she could to repress her feelings; and our heroine, all she could to make her and them ridiculous. But in this attempt, she was unsuccessful, for many of the spectators, who at her instigation began by watching Emma's countenance to find subject for ridicule, ended by sympathizing with her unaffected sensibility.

When

When the tale was ended, the modern Griselda, who was determined to oppose as strongly as possible the charms of spirit to those of sensibility, burst furious forth into an invective, against the meanness of her namesake, and the tyranny of the odious Gualtherus.

Could you have forgiven him Mrs. Granby? could you have forgiven the monster?

He repented, said Emma, and does not a penitent cease to be a monster?

O, I never, never would have forgiven him, penitent or not penitent; I would not have forgiven him such sins.

I would not have put it into his power to commit them, said Emma.

I confess

I confess the story never touched me in the least, cried Mrs. Bolingbroke.

Perhaps for the same reason, that Petrarch's friend said, that he read it unmoved; replied Mrs. Granby: because he could not believe, that such a woman as Griselda ever existed.

No, no, not for that reason: I believe many such poor, meek, mean-spirited creatures exist.

Emma was at length wakened to the perception of her friend's envy and jealousy; but—

" She mild forgave the failing of her sex."

I cannot admire the original Griselda, or any of her imitators, continued our heroine.

There is no great danger of her

finding imitators in these days, said Mr. Granby. Had Chaucer lived in our enlightened times, he would doubtless have drawn a very different character.

The modern Griselda looked "fierce as ten furies." Emma softened her husband's observation by adding, that

Allowance should certainly be made for poor Chaucer, if we consider the times in which he wrote. The situation and understandings of women have been so much improved since his days. Women were then slaves, now they are free. My dear, whispered she to her husband, your mother is not well, shall we go home?

Emma left the room, and even Mrs. Nettleby, after she was gone, said

Really

Really she is not ugly when she blushes.

No woman is ugly when she blushes, replied our heroine; but unluckily a woman cannot *always* blush.

Finding that her attempt to make Emma ridiculous had failed, and that it had really placed Mrs. Granby's understanding, manners, and temper, in a most advantageous and amiable light; Griselda was mortified beyond measure. She could scarcely bear to hear Emma's name mentioned.

CHAP. V.

" She that can please, is certain to persuade,
" To day is loved, to morrow is obeyed.

A FEW days after the reading party, Griselda was invited to spend an evening at Mrs. Granby's.

I shall not go, said she, throwing down the card with an air of disdain.

I shall go, said her husband, calmly.

You will go my dear! cried she, amazed.

You will go without *me?*

Not without you, if you will be so kind as to go with me my love, said he.

It

It is quite out of my power, said she; I am engaged to my friend Mrs. Nettleby.

Very well my dear, said he; do as you please.

Certainly I shall. And I am surprised, my dear, that you do not go to see Mr. John Nettleby.

I have no desire to see him, my dear. He is, as I have often heard you say, an obstinate fool. He is a man I dislike particularly.

Very possibly, but you ought to go to see him notwithstanding.

Why so, my dear?

Because he is married to a woman I like. If you had any regard for me, your own feelings would have saved you the trouble of asking that question.

But, my dear, should not your regard for me also suggest to you, the propriety of keeping up an acquaintance with Mrs. Granby, who is married to a man I like; and who is not herself an obstinate fool.

I shall not enter into any discussion upon the subject, replied our heroine, for this was one of the cases, where she made it a rule never to reason. I can only say, that I have my own opinion, and that I beg to be excused from keeping up any acquaintance whatever with Mrs. Granby.

And I beg to be excused from keeping up any acquaintance whatever with Mr. Nettleby; replied her husband.

Good Heavens! cried she, raising herself upon the sofa, on which she had

had been reclining, and fixing her eyes upon her husband, with unfeigned astonishment: I do not know you this morning, my dear.

Possibly not, my dear, replied he, for hitherto you have seen only your lover, now you see your husband.

Never did metamorphosis excite more astonishment. The lady was utterly unconscious that she had had any part in producing it, that she had herself dissolved the spell. She raged, she raved, she reasoned, in vain. Her point she could not compass. Her cruel husband persisted in his determination not to go to see Mr. John Nettleby. Absolutely astounded she was silent. There was a truce for some hours. She renewed the attack

in the evening, and ceased not hostilities for three succeeding days and nights in reasonable hopes of wearying the enemy, still without success. The morning rose, the great the important day, which was to decide the fate of the visit. The contending parties met as usual at breakfast; they seemed mutually afraid of each other, and stood at bay. There was a forced calm in the gentleman's demeanour, treacherous smiles played upon the lady's countenance. He seemed cautious to prolong the suspension of hostilities, she fond to anticipate the victory. The name of Mrs. Granby, or of Mr. John Nettleby, was not uttered by either party, nor did either inquire where the other was to spend

the evening; at dinner, they met again, and preserved on this delicate subject, a truly diplomatic silence, whilst on the topics foreign to their thoughts, they talked with admirable fluency: actuated by as sincere desire, as ever was felt by negotiating politicians, to establish peace on the broadest basis, they were, *with the most perfect consideration*, each other's devoted, and most obedient humble servants. Candor, however, obliges us to confess that though the deference on the part of the gentleman was the most unqualified and praise worthy, the lady was superior in her inimitable air of frank cordiality. The *volto sciolto*, was in her favour, the *pensieri stretti*, in his. Any one but an ambassador,

bassador, would have been deceived by the husband; any one but a woman, would have been duped by the wife. So stood affairs, when after dinner, the high and mighty powers separated. The lady retired to her toilette. The gentleman remained with his bottle. He drank a glass of wine extraordinary. She stayed half an hour more than usual at her mirror. Arrayed for battle, our heroine repaired to the drawing-room, which she expected to find unoccupied;—the enemy had taken the field.

Dressed my dear said he.

Ready my love! said she.

Shall I ring the bell for your carriage, my dear? said the husband.

If

If you please. You go with me my dear? said the wife.

I do not know where you are going, my love.

To Mrs. Nettleby's of course, and you?

To Mrs. Granby's.

The lightning flashed from Griselda's eyes, ere he had half pronounced the words. The lightning flashed without effect.

To Mrs. Granby's! cried she, in a thundering tone. To Mrs. Granby's! echoed he: she fell back on the sofa, and a shower of tears ensued. Her husband walked up and down the room, rang again for the carriage, ordered it, in the tone of a master. Then hummed a tune. The fair one sobbed,

sobbed, he continued to sing, but was out in the time. The lady's sobs grew alarming, and threatened hysterics. He threw open the window, and approached the sofa on which she lay. She half recovering, unclasped one bracelet; in haste to get the other off, he broke it. The footman came in to announce that the carriage was at the door. She relapsed, and seemed in danger of suffocation from her pearl necklace, which she made a faint effort to loosen from her neck.

Send your lady's woman, instantly, cried Griselda's husband, to the footman.

Our heroine made another attempt to untie her necklace, and looked up towards her husband with supplicating

eyes,

eyes. His hands trembled, he entangled the strings. It would have been all over with him if the maid had not at this instant come to his assistance. To her he resigned his perilous post; retreated precipitately; and before the enemy's forces could rally, gained his carriage, and carried his point.

To Mr. Granby's! cried he, triumphantly. Arrived there, he hurried to Mr. Granby's room.

Another such victory, cried he, throwing himself into an arm-chair; another such victory, and I am undone.

He related all that had just passed between him and his wife.

Another such combat, said his friend, and you are at peace for life.

We

We hope that our readers will not, from this speech, be induced to consider Mr. Granby as an instigator of quarrels between man and wife; or, according to the plebeian, but expressive apophthegm, one who would come between the bark and the tree. On the contrary, he was most desirous to secure his friend's domestic happiness; and, if possible, to prevent the bad effects which were likely to ensue from excessive indulgence, and inordinate love of dominion. He had a high respect for our heroine's powers, and thought that they wanted only to be well managed. The same force which, ill directed, bursts the engine, and scatters destruction, obedient to the master-hand, answers a thousand useful purposes, and works

with

with easy, smooth, and graceful regularity. Griselda's husband, or, as he now deserves to have his name mentioned, Mr. Bolingbroke, roused by his friend's representations, and perhaps by a sense of approaching danger, resolved to assume the guidance of his wife, or at least of himself. In opposition to his sovereign lady's will, he actually spent this evening as he pleased.

CHAP. VI.

" E sol quei giorni io mi vidi contenta.
" C'haverla compiaciuto mi trovai."

You are a great deal more courageous than I am, my dear, said Emma to her husband, after Mr. Bolingbroke had left them. I should be very much afraid of interfering between your friend and his wife.

What is friendship, said Mr. Granby, if it will run no risks? I must run the hazard of being called a mischief-maker.

That is not the danger of which I was thinking, said Emma; though I confess that I should be weak enough

to

to fear that a little: but what I meant to express was an apprehension of our doing harm, where we most wish to do good.

Do you, my dear Emma, think Griselda incorrigible?

No, indeed, cried Emma, with anxious emphasis, far from it: but, without thinking a person incorrigible, may we not dislike the idea of inflicting correction? I should be very sorry to be the means of giving Griselda any pain; she was my friend when we were children; I have a real regard for her, and if she does not now seem disposed to love me, that must be my fault, not hers: or if it is not my fault, call it my misfortune. At all events, I have no

right to force myself upon her acquaintance. She prefers Mrs. Nettleby; I have not the false humility to say, that I think Mrs. Nettleby will prove as safe or as good a friend as I hope I should be. But of this Mrs. Bolingbroke has a right to judge. And I am sure, far from resenting her resolution to avoid my acquaintance, my only feeling about it, at this instant, is, the dread that it should continue to be a matter of dispute between her and her husband.

If Mr. Bolingbroke insisted, or if I advised him to insist upon his wife's coming here, when she does not like it, said Mr. Granby, I should act absurdly, and he would act unjustly; but all that he requires is equality of rights, and the

the liberty of going where *he* pleases. She refuses to come to see you; he refuses to go to see Mr. John Nettleby. Which has the best of the battle?

Emma thought it would be best if there were no battle, and observed, that refusals, and reprisals would only irritate the parties whose interest and happiness it was to be pacified and to agree. She said, that if Mr. Bolingbroke, instead of opposing his will to that of his wife, which, in fact, was only conquering force by force, would speak reasonably to her, probably she might be induced to yield, or to command her temper. Mrs. Granby suggested, that a compromise, founded on an offer of mutual sacrifice, and mutual compliance, might be obtained. That Mr. Bolingbroke

might promise to give up some of his time to the man he disliked, upon condition that Griselda should submit to the society of a woman to whom she had an aversion.

If she consented to this, said Emma, I would do my best to make her like me; or at least to make her time pass agreeably at our house: her liking me is a matter of no manner of consequence.

Emma was capable of putting herself entirely out of the question, when the interest of others was at stake; her whole desire was to conciliate, and all her thoughts were intent upon making her friends happy. She seemed to live in them more than in herself, and from sympathy arose the greatest pleasure and pain of her existence. Her sym-

pathy

pathy was not of that useless kind, which is called forth only by the elegant fictitious sorrows of a heroine of romance; her's was ready for all the occasions of real life; nor was it to be easily checked by the imperfections of those to whom she could be of service. At this moment, when she perceived that her husband was disgusted by Griselda's caprice, she said all she could think of in her favour: she recollected every anecdote of Griselda's childhood, which showed an amiable disposition; and argued, that it was not probable her temper should have entirely changed in a few years. Emma's quick-sighted good nature could discern the least portion of merit, where others could find only faults; as certain experienced eyes

can discover grains of gold in the sands, which the ignorant have searched, and abandoned as useless. In consequence of Emma's advice, for who would reject good advice, offered with so much gentleness, Mr. Granby wrote a note to Mr. Bolingbroke, to recommend the compromise which she had suggested. Upon his return home, Mr. Bolingbroke was informed that his lady had gone to bed much indisposed; he spent a restless night, notwithstanding all his newly acquired magnanimity. He was much relieved in the morning by his friend's note, and blessed Emma for proposing the compromise.

CHAP. VII.

" Each widow to her secret friend alone,
" Whispered; Thus treated, he had had his
" own."

Mr. Bolingbroke waited with impatience for Griselda's appearance the next morning, but he waited in vain: the lady breakfasted in her own apartment, and for two hours afterwards remained in close consultation with Mrs. Nettleby, whom she had summoned the preceding night by the following note.

" I have been prevented from spending this evening with you my dearest

Mrs. Nettleby, by the strangest conduct imaginable: I am sure you will not believe it when I tell it to you. Come to me, I conjure you, as early to morrow as you possibly can, that I may explain to you all that has past, and consult as to the future. My dearest friend, I never was so much in want of an adviser. Ever yours,

GRISELDA."

At this consultation Mrs. Nettleby expressed the utmost astonishment at Mr. Bolingbroke's strange conduct, and assured Griselda, that if she did not exert herself all was lost, and she must give up the hopes of ever having her own way again as long as she lived.

My dear, said she, I have had some experience in these things; a wife must

be

be either a tyrant or a slave: Make your choice; now is your time.

But I never knew him say or do any thing unkind before, said Griselda.

Then the first offence should be properly resented. If he finds you forgiving, he will become encroaching; 'tis the nature of man, depend upon it.

He always yielded to me till now, said Griselda; but even when I was ready to go into fits, he left me; and what could I do then?

You astonish me beyond expression! You who have every advantage! youth, wit, accomplishments, beauty! My dear, if you cannot keep a husband's heart, who can ever hope to succeed?

Oh! as to his heart, I have no doubts of his heart, to do him justice, said Griselda;

Griselda; I know he loves me—passionately loves me.

And yet you cannot manage him! And you expect me to pity you? Bless me, if I had half your advantages, what I would make of them! But if you like to be a tame wife, my dear, if you are resolved upon it, tell me so at once, and I will hold my tongue.

I do not know well what I am resolved upon, said Griselda, leaning her head in a melancholy posture upon her hand; I am vexed, out of spirits, and out of sorts.

Out of sorts! I am not surprised at that: but out of spirits! My dear creature, you who have every thing to put you in spirits. I am never so much

myself,

myself, as when I have a quarrel to fight out.

I cannot say that is the case with me, unless where I am sure of the victory.

And it is your own fault, if you are not always sure of it.

I thought so till last night; but I assure you last night he showed such a spirit!

Break that spirit, my dear, break it, or else it will break your heart.

The alternative is terrible, said Griselda, and more probable perhaps than you could imagine, or I either till now: for would you believe it, I never loved him in my life half so well as I did last night in the midst of my anger, and when he was doing every thing to provoke me.

Very

Very natural my dear; because you saw him behave with spirit, and you love spirit; so does every woman; so does every body: show him that you have spirit too, and he will be as angry as you were, and love you as well in the midst of his anger, whilst you are doing every thing to provoke him.

Griselda appeared determined to take this good advice one moment, and the next hesitated.

But my dear Mrs. Nettleby, did you always find this succeed yourself?

Yes, always.

This lady had the reputation indeed of having broken the heart of her first husband; how she would manage her second, was yet to be seen, as her honey-moon was but just over. The

pure

pure love of mischief was not her only motive in the advice which she gave to our heroine; she had like most people, mixed motives for her conduct. She disliked Mr. Bolingbroke, because he disliked her; yet she wished that an acquaintance should be kept up between him and her husband, because Mr. Bolingbroke was a man of fortune and fashion.

Griselda promised that she would behave with that proper spirit, which was to make her at once amiable and victorious, and the friends parted.

CHAP. VIII.

" With patient, meek, submissive mind,
" To her hard fate resigned."

POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS

LEFT to her own good genius, Griselda reflected that novelty has the most powerful effect upon the heart of man. In all the variations of her humour, her husband had never yet seen her in the sullen mood; and in this, she now sat prepared to receive him. He came with an earnest desire to speak to her in the kindest and most reasonable manner. He began by saying, how much it had cost him to give her one

one moment's uneasiness; his voice, his look, were those of truth and love.

Unmoved Griselda, without raising her leaden eyes, answered in a cold voice,

I am very sorry that you should have felt *any* concern upon my account.

Any! my love, you do not know how *much* I have felt this night.

She looked upon him with civil disbelief; and replied, "that she was sure she ought to be much obliged to him."

This frigid politeness repressed his affection: he was silent for some moments.

My dear Griselda, said he, this is not the way in which we should live together; we who have every thing that can make us contented, do not let

us

us throw away our happiness for trifles not worth thinking of.

If we are not happy, it is not my fault, said Griselda.

We will not inquire whose fault it is, my dear, let the blame rest upon me; let the past be forgotten; let us look towards the future. In future, let us avoid childish altercations, and live like reasonable creatures. I have the highest opinion of your sex in general, and of you in particular; I wish to live with my wife as my equal, my friend: I do not desire that my will should govern; where our inclinations differ, let reason decide between us; or where it is a matter not worth reasoning about, let us alternately yield to one another. He paused.

I do

I do not desire or expect that you should ever henceforward yield to my wishes, either in trifles or in matters of consequence, replied Griselda, with provoking meekness; you have taught me my duty: the duty of a wife is to submit; and submit I hope I shall in future, without reply or reasoning, to your sovereign will and pleasure.

Nay, my dear, said he, do not treat me as a brutal tyrant, when I wish to do every thing in my power to make you happy. Use your own excellent understanding, and I shall always I hope be inclined to yield to your reasons.

I shall never trouble you with my reasons; I shall never use my own understanding in the least: I know that

men cannot bear understanding in women; I shall always, as it is my duty, submit to your better judgment.

But my love, I do not require duty from you; this sort of blind submission would be mortifying, instead of gratifying to me from a wife.

I do not know what a wife can do to satisfy a husband, if submitting in every thing be not sufficient.

I say it would be too much for me my dearest love!

I can do nothing but submit, repeated the perverse Griselda, with a most provoking immovable aspect of humility.

Why *will* you not understand me my dear? cried her husband.

It is not my fault if I cannot understand

stand you my dear ; I do not pretend to have your understanding said the fair politician, affecting weakness to gain her point ; like those artful candidates for papal dominion, who used to affect decrepitude and imbecillity, till they secured at once absolute power and infallibility.

I know my abilities are quite inferior to yours, my dear, said Griselda, but I thought it was sufficient for a woman to know how to obey : I can do no more.

Fretted beyond his patience, her husband walked up and down the room greatly agitated, whilst she sat content and secure in tranquil obstinacy.

You are enough to provoke the pa-

tience of Job, my dear, cried her husband; you'll break my heart.

I am sorry for it, my dear; but if you will only tell me what I can do more to please you I will do it.

Then my love, cried he, taking hold of her white hand, which hung in a lifeless attitude over the arm of the couch; be happy I conjure you! all I ask of you, is, to be happy.

That is out of my power, said she, mildly, suffering her husband to keep her hand, as if it was an act of duty to submit to his caresses. He resigned her hand; her countenance never varied; if she had been slave to the most despotic Sultan of the East, she could not have shown more heartless submission, than she displayed to this

most

most indulgent European "husband lover."

Unable to command his temper, or to conceal how much he was hurt, he rose and said,

I will leave you for the present, my dear; some time when you are better disposed to converse with me, I will return.

Whenever you please sir; all times are alike to me: whenever you are at leisure, I can have no choice.

CHAP. IX.

" And acting duty all the merit lose."

SOME hours afterwards, hoping to find his sultana in a better humour, Mr. Bolingbroke returned; but no sooner did he approach the sofa on which she was still seated, than she again seemed to turn into stone, like the Princess Rhezzia, in the Persian Tales; who was blooming and charming, except when her husband entered the room. The unfortunate Princess Rhezzia loved her husband tenderly, but was doomed to this fate by a vile enchanter. If she was more to be pitied for being subject

to

to involuntary metamorphosis, our heroine is surely more to be admired, for the constancy with which she endured a self-inflicted penance ; a penance calculated to render her odious in the eyes of a husband by whom she was passionately beloved.

My dear, said this most patient of men, I am sorry to renew any ideas that will be disagreeable to you ; I will mention the subject but once more, and then let it be forgotten for ever. Our foolish dispute about Mr. Nettleby. Let us compromise the matter. I will bear Mr. John Nettleby for your sake, if you will bear Mrs. Granby for mine. I will go to see Mr. Nettleby to-morrow, if you will come the day afterwards with me to Mr. Granby's. Where hus-

band and wife do not agree in their wishes, it is reasonable that each should yield a little of their will to the other. I hope this compromise will satisfy you, my dear.

It does not become a wife to enter into any compromise with her husband; she has nothing to do but to obey, as soon as he signifies his pleasure. I shall go to Mr. Granby's on Tuesday, as you command.

Command! my love.

As you——whatever you please to call it.

But are you satisfied with this arrangement, my dear?

It is of no manner of consequence whether I am or not.

To me, you know, it is of the greatest:

you

you must be sensible; that my sincere wish is to make you happy: I give you some proof of it by consenting to keep up an acquaintance with a man whose company I dislike.

I am much obliged to you, my dear, but as to your going to see Mr. John Nettleby, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me; I only just mentioned it, as a thing of course; I beg you will not do it on my account: I hope you will do whatever you think best, and what pleases yourself, upon this and every other occasion, I shall never more presume to offer my advice.

Nothing more could be obtained from the submissive wife; she went to Mr. Granby's; she was all duty, for she knew the show of it was the most provoking

voking thing upon earth to a husband, at least to such a husband as hers. She therefore persisted in this line of conduct, till she made her victim at last exclaim,

" I love thee and hate thee, but if I can tell
" The cause of my love and my hate, may I die.
" I can feel it, alas ! I can feel it too well,
" That I love thee and hate thee, but cannot
" tell why."

His fair one was much flattered by this confession ; she triumphed in having excited " this contrariety of feelings ;" nor did she foresee the possibility of her husband's recollecting that stanza which the school-boy, more philosophical than the poet, applies to his tyrant.

Whilst our heroine was thus acting to perfection

perfection the part of a dutiful wife, Mrs. Nettleby was seconding her to the best of her abilities, and announcing her amongst all their acquaintance, in the interesting character of—"a woman that is very much to be pitied."

"Poor Mrs. Bolingbroke!—Don't you think, Ma'am, she is very much changed since her marriage?—Quite fallen away!—And all her fine spirits, what are become of them?—It really grieves my heart to see her.—O, she is a very unhappy woman; really to be pitied, if you knew but all."

Then a significant nod, or a melancholy mysterious look, set the imagination of the company at work; or if this did not succeed, a whisper in plain terms, pronounced Mr. Bolingbroke—

"a sad

" a sad sort of husband, a very odd tempered man, and, in short, a terrible tyrant; though nobody would guess it, who only saw him in company; but men are such deceivers!"

Mr. Bolingbroke soon found that all his wishes were thwarted, and all his hopes of happiness crossed, by the straws which this evil-minded dame contrived to throw in his way. Her influence over his wife he saw increased every hour: though they visited each other every day, these ladies could never meet without having some important secrets to impart, and conjurations were to be performed in private, at which a husband could not be permitted to assist. Then notes without number were to pass continually, and these were to

be thrown hastily into the fire, at the approach of the enemy. Mr. Bolingbroke determined to break this league, which seemed to be more a league of hatred than of amity.——The London winter was now over, and, taking advantage of the continuance of his wife's perverse fit of duty and unqualified submission, he one day requested her to accompany him into the country, to spend a few weeks with his friend Mr. Granby, at his charming place in Devonshire. The part of a wife was to obey, and Griselda was bound to support her character. She resolved, however, to make her obedience cost her lord as dear as possible, and she promised himself that this party of pleasure should become a party of pain. She

and

and her lord were to travel in the same carriage with Mr. and Mrs. Granby. Griselda had only time, before she set off, to write a hasty billet to Mrs. Nettleby, to inform her of these intentions, and to bid her adieu, till better times. Mrs. Nettleby sincerely regretted this interruption of their hourly correspondence; for she was deprived not only of the pleasure of hearing, but of making matrimonial complaints. She had now been married two months, and her fool began to grow restive; no animal on earth is more restive than a fool: but confident that Mrs. Nettleby will hold the bridle with a strong hand, we leave her to pull against his hard mouth.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

"Playzir ne l'est qu'autant qu'on le partage."

We pass over the infinite variety of petty torments, which our heroine contrived to inflict upon her fellow-travellers, during her journey down to Devonshire. Inns, food, beds, carriage, horses, baggage, roads, prospect, hill, dale, sun, wind, dust, rain, earth, air, fire, and water, all afforded her matter of complaint. It was astonishing that Emma met with none of these inconveniences; but as fast as they were discovered, she amused herself in trying to obviate them.

Lord

Lord Kames has observed, that a power to recal at will pleasing objects, would be a more valuable gift to any mortal than ever was bestowed in a fairy tale. With this power Emma was endowed, in the highest perfection; and as fast as our heroine recollected some evil that had happened, or was likely to happen, Emma raised the opposite idea of some good, past, present, or future; so that it was scarcely possible even for the spirit of contradiction personified, to resist the magic of her good humour. No sooner did she arrive at her own house, than she contrived a variety of ways of showing attention and kindness to her guest; and when all this was received with sullen indifference, or merely as tributes due

to

to superiority, Emma was not discouraged in her benevolence, but, instead of being offended, seemed to pity her friend for "having had her temper so unhappily spoiled."

"Griselda is so handsome," said Mrs. Granby one day, in her defence, "she has such talents, she has been so much admired, worshipped, and indulged, that it would be wonderful if she were not a little spoiled. I dare say, that if I had been in her place, my brain would never have stood the intoxication. Who can measure their strength, or their weakness, till they are tried? Another thing should be considered; Griselda excites envy, and though she may not have more faults than her neighbours, they are more

noticed, because they are in the full light of prosperity. What a number of motes swarm in a single ray of light, coming through the shutter of a darkened room? there are not more motes in that spot than in any other part of the room, but the sun-beams show them more distinctly. The dust that lives in snug obscurity should consider this, and have mercy upon its fellow dust."

In Emma's kindness there was none of the parade of goodness, she seemed to follow her natural disposition, and as Griselda once said of her, to be good, because she could not help it. She required neither praise nor thanks for any thing that she did; and, provided her friends were happy, she was satisfied, without

without ever wishing to be admired, as the cause of that happiness. Her powers of pleasing were chiefly remarkable for lasting longer than others, and the secret of their permanence was not easily guessed, because it was so simple. It depended merely on the equability of her humour. It is said, that there is nothing marvellous in the colours of those Egyptian monuments which have been the admiration of ages; the secret of their duration is supposed to depend simply on the fineness of the climate and invariability of the temperature.——But

"Griselda will admit no wandering muse."

Mrs. Bolingbroke was by this time tired of continuing in one mood, even

though it was the sullen, and her genius was cramped by the constraint of affected submission. She recovered her charming spirits soon after she came into the country, and, for a short time, no mortal mixture of earth's mould could be more agreeable. She called forth every charm; she was all gaiety, wit, and smiles; she poured light and life upon conversation.

As the Marquis de Chastellux said of some fascinating fair one,—"She had no expression without grace, and no grace without expression." It was delightful to our heroine to hear it said,

"How charming Mrs. Bolingbroke can be when she pleases; when she wishes to captivate, how irresistible!—

Who

Who can equal Mrs. Bolingbroke, when she is in one of her *good days?*"

The triumph of eclipsing Mrs. Granby would have been delightful, but that Emma seemed to feel no mortification from being thrown into the shade; she seemed to enjoy her friend's success so sincerely, that it was impossible to consider her as a rival. She had so carefully avoided noticing any little disagreement or coolness between Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke, that it might have been doubted whether she attended to their mutual conduct; but the obvious delight she took in seeing them again on good terms with each other, proved that she was not deficient in penetration. She appeared to see only what others desired that she

should see, upon these delicate occasions, where voluntary blindness is not artifice, but prudence. Mr. Bolingbroke was now enchanted with Griselda, and ready to exclaim every instant, " Be ever thus !"

Her husband thought he had found a mine of happiness ; he began to breathe, and to bless his kind stars. He had indeed lighted unexpectedly upon a rich vein, but it was soon exhausted, and all his further progress was impeded, by certain vapours, dangerous to approach. Fatal sweets ! which lure the ignorant to destruction, but from which the more experienced fly with precipitation.——Our heroine was now fully prepared to kill her husband with kindness ; she was afraid if

he

he rode, that his horse would throw him ; if he walked, that he would tire himself; if he sat still, that he must want exercise ; if he went out, that he would catch cold; if he stayed at home, that he was kept a prisoner! if he did not eat, that he was sick ; if he did eat, that he would be sick;—&c. &c. &c. &c. There was no end to these fond fears; he felt that there was something ridiculous in submitting to them; and yet to resist in the least, was deemed the height of unkindness and ingratitude. One night she fell into a fit of melancholy, upon his laughing at her fears, that he should kill himself, by standing for an instant at an open window, on a fine night, to look at a beautiful rising moon. When he endeavoured to re-

cover her from her melancholy, it was suddenly converted into anger, and, after tears, came a storm of reproaches. Her husband, in consideration of the kindness of her original intention, passed over her anger, and even for some days refrained from objecting to any regimen she prescribed for his health and happiness. But his forbearance failed him at length, and he presumed to eat some salad, which his wife "knew would disagree with him." She was provoked afterwards, because she could not make him allow that it had made him ill. She termed this extreme obstinacy; he pleaded that it was simple truth. Truth, upon some occasions, is the most offensive thing that can be spoken; the lady was enraged,

raged, and, after saying every thing provoking, that matrimonial spleen could suggest, when he in his turn grew warm, she cooled, and said, " You must be sensible, my dear, that all I say and do, arises from affection."

O, my love, said he, recovering his good humour, this never-failing opiate soothes my vanity, and lulls my anger; then you may govern me as you please. Torment me to death,—I cannot oppose you.

I suppose, said she, you think me like the vampire-bat, who fans her victim to sleep with her wings, whilst she sucks his life blood.

Yes, exactly, said he, smiling; thank you for the apt allusion.

Very apt indeed, said she, and a thick

thick gloom overspread her countenance. She persisted in taking his assent in sober earnest. "Yes," said she, "I find you think all my kindness is treacherous. I will show you no more, and then you cannot accuse me of treachery."

It was in vain that he protested he had been only in jest; she was convinced that he was in earnest; she was suddenly afflicted with an absolute incapacity of distinguishing jest from earnest. She recurred to the idea of the vampire-bat, whenever it was convenient to her to suppose that her husband thought strange things of her, which never entered his brain. This bat proved to him a bird of ill omen, which preceded a train of misfortunes,

that

that no mortal foresight could reach, and no human prudence avert. His Goddess was not to be appeased by any propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

"Short is the period of insulting power,
" Offended Cupid finds his vengeful hour."

FINDING it impossible to regain his fair one's favour, Mr. Bolingbroke absented himself from her presence. He amused himself for some days with his friend Mr. Granby, in attending to a plantation, which he was laying out in his grounds. Griselda was vexed to perceive that her husband could find any amusement independent of her; and she never failed, upon his return, to mark her displeasure.

One morning the gentlemen had been so much occupied with their plantation,

tation, that they did not attend the breakfast-table precisely in due time; the contrast in the looks of the two ladies when their husbands entered the room was striking. Griselda was provoked with Mrs. Granby for being so good humoured.

Lord bless me! Mrs. Granby, how you spoil these men, cried she.

All the time the gentlemen were at breakfast, Mrs. Bolingbroke played with her tea-spoon, and did not deign to utter a syllable: Emma, on the contrary, inquired how their plantation was going on, and interested herself in the most unaffected and agreeable manner, in the object upon which their minds happened to be intent. No one more than Emma, had the habit of interesting

teresting herself in all the daily occupations, and little objects of her friends. These minute attentions frequently recurring, tend materially to increase affection, and secure domestic happiness. By such slender, and scarcely perceptible fibres, is society *felted* together.

When the gentlemen left the breakfast-table, and returned to their business; Griselda, who was as our readers may have observed, one of the fashionable lollers by profession; established herself upon a couch, and began an attack upon Emma, for spoiling her husband in such a sad manner. Emma defended herself in a playful way, by answering that she could not venture to give unnecessary pain, because she

was

was not so sure as some of her friends might be, of their power of giving pleasure. Mrs. Bolingbroke proceeded to descant upon the difference between friendship and love: with some vanity, and some malice, she touched upon the difference between the *sorts of sentiments*, which different women excited. Passion, she argued, could be kept alive, only by a certain happy mixture of caprice and grace, coldness and ill-humour. She confessed, that for her part, she never could be content with the friendship of a husband. Emma, without claiming or disclaiming her pretensions to love, quoted the saying of a French gentleman:

" L'Amitié est L'Amour sans ailes*."

* Friendship is Love deprived of his wings.

Griselda had no apprehension that love could ever fly from her, and she declared she could not endure him without his wings.

Our heroine did not imagine, that any of the little vexations, which she habitually inflicted upon her husband, could really diminish his regard. She never had calculated the prodigious effects which can be produced by petty causes constantly acting. Indeed this is a consideration, to which the pride or short-sightedness of human nature is not prone.

Who in contemplating one of Raphael's finest pictures, fresh from the master's hand, ever bestowed a thought upon the wretched little worm, which works its destruction? Who that beholds

holds the gilded vessel, gliding in gallant trim; "youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm;" ever at that instant thought of —— barnacles? The imagination is disgusted by the anti-climax, and of all species of the bathos, the sinking from visionary happiness to sober reality, is that from which human nature is most averse. The wings of the imagination accustomed to ascend, resist the downward flight.

Confident of her charms, heedless of danger, habituated to think her empire absolute and eternal; our heroine to amuse herself, and to display her power to Emma, persisted in her practice of tormenting. The ingenuity with which she varied her tortures, was certainly admirable. After exhausting old ones,

she invented new; and when the new lost their efficacy, she recurred to the old. She had often observed, that the blunt method of contradicting, which some bosom friends practice in conversation, is of sovereign power to provoke; and this consequently, though unpolite, she disdained not to imitate. It had the greater effect, as it was in diametrical opposition to the style of Mrs, Granby's conversation; who in discussions with her husband, or her intimate friends, was peculiarly and habitually attentive to politeness. She gave her opinions always freely, but with constant deference or charity for the sentiments of her friends. Arguments, as she managed them, never degenerated into

into disputes; and the true end of conversation, that of giving and receiving pleasure, was never sacrificed to the vanity of saying good things, or to the pride of victory.

CHAP. XII.

" Ella biasmandol sempre, e dispregiando
" Se gli venia piu sempre inimicando."

By her judicious and kind interposition, Emma often prevented the disagreeable consequences, that threatened to ensue from Griselda's disputatious habits: but one night it was past her utmost skill to avert a violent storm, which arose about the pronunciation of a word. It began about eleven o'clock. Just as the family were sitting down to supper, seemingly in perfect harmony of spirits; Mr. Bolingbroke chanced to say,

I think

I think the wind is rising. (He pronounced the word *wĭnd, short.*)

Wĭnd! my dear, cried his wife, echoing his pronunciation; do for Heaven's sake call it wind.

The lady sounded this word long.

Wind! my love, repeated he after her: I doubt whether that be the right pronunciation.

I am surprised you can doubt it, said she, for I never heard any body call it *wĭnd* but yourself.

Did not you, my love, that is very extraordinary; many people I believe call it *wĭnd.*

Vulgarians, perhaps!

Vulgarians! No indeed, my dear; very polite well informed people.

Griselda, with a look of unutterable contempt, reiterated the word *polite!*

Yes, my dear, *polite!* persisted Mr. Bolingbroke, who was now come to such a pass, that he would defend his opinion in opposition to hers, stoutly and warmly. Yes, *polite* my dear, I maintain it; the most *polite* people pronounce it as I do.

You may maintain what you please, my dear, said the lady, coolly; but I maintain the contrary.

Assertion is no proof on either side I acknowledge, said Mr. Bolingbroke, recollecting himself.

No, in truth, said Mrs. Bolingbroke, especially such an absurd assertion as yours, my dear. Now I will go no farther than Mrs. Granby: Mrs. Granby,

by, did you ever hear any person, who knew how to speak, pronounce wind—*wĭnd?*

Mrs. Granby, have not you heard it called *wīnd* in good company?

The disputants eagerly approached her, at the same instant, and looked as if their fortunes or lives depended upon the decision.

I think I have heard the word pronounced both ways, by wellbred and well informed people, said Mrs. Granby.

That is saying nothing, my dear, said Mrs. Bolingbroke, pettishly.

That is saying all I want, said Mr. Bolingbroke, satisfied.

I would lay any wager, however, that Mr.********, if he were here, would give it in my favour; and I sup-

pose you will not dispute his authority.

I will not dispute the authority of Sheridan's dictionary, cried Mr. Bolingbroke, taking it down from the bookcase, and turning over the leaves hastily. Sheridan gives it for me, my dear, said he, with exultation.

You need not speak with such triumph, my dear, for I do not submit to Sheridan.

No! Will you submit to Kenrick then?

Let us see what he says, and I will then tell you? said the lady. No—Kenrick was not of her opinion, and he was no authority. Walker was produced; and this battle of the pronouncing dictionaries, seemed likely to have

have no end. Mrs. Granby when she could be heard, remarked that it was difficult to settle any dispute about pronunciation, because in fact no reasons could be produced, and no standard appealed to but custom, which is perpetually changing; and as Johnson says, "whilst our language is variable with the caprice of all who use it, words can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove in the agitation of a storm, can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water."

The combatants would scarcely allow Emma time to finish this allusion, and certainly did not give themselves time to understand it; but continued to fight about the word custom, the only word that they had heard.

Yes,

Yes, custom! custom! cried they at once, custom must decide to be sure. Then came *my* custom and *your* custom; the custom of the stage, the custom of the best company, the custom of the best poets; and all these were opposed to one another with increasing rapidity. Good heavens, my dear! did you ever hear Kemble say, "Rage on ye *winds!*" ridiculous!

I grant you on the stage it may be winds; but in common conversation it is allowable to pronounce it as I do, my dear.

I appeal to the best poets, Mr. Bolingbroke, nothing can be more absurd than your way of——

"Listen lively lordlings all!" interrupted Emma, pressing with playful vehemence

vehemence between the disputants; I must be heard, for I have not spoken this half hour, and thus I pronounce,

" You both are right and both are wrong."

And now, my good friends, had not we better go to rest? said she, for it is past midnight.

As they took their candles, and went up stairs, the parties continued the battle; Mrs. Bolingbroke brought quotations innumerable to her aid, and in a shrill tone repeated,

" He might not let e'en the winds of heaven
" Visit her face too roughly."

———— " pass by me as the idle wind,
" Which I respect not."

" And

" And let her down the wind to prey at
" fortune."

" Blow, blow thou winter's wind,
" Thou art not so unkind."

" Blow winds and crack your cheeks; rage,
" blow."

Her voice was raised to the highest pitch; it was in vain that her husband repeated that he acknowledged the word should be called as she pronounced it in poetry; she reiterated her quotations and her assertions till at last she knew not what she said; her sense failed the more her anger increased. At length Mr. Bolingbroke yielded. Noise conquers sometimes where art fails.

Thus, said he, the hawk that could not be hood-winked, was at last tamed,

by

by being exposed to the din of a black-smith's hammer.

Griselda was incensed by this remark, and still more by the allusion, which she called the second edition of the vampire-bat. Both husband and wife went to sleep mutually displeased, and more disgusted with each other than they had ever been since their marriage: and all this for the pronunciation of a word!

Early in the morning they were wakened by a messenger, who brought an express, informing Mr. Bolingbroke that his uncle was not expected to live, and that he wished to see him immediately. Mr. Bolingbroke rose instantly: all the time that he was dressing, and preparing in the greatest hurry for

for his journey, Griselda tormented him by disputing about the propriety of his going, and ended with

Promise me to write every post, my dear, positively you must.

CHAP. XIII.

"He sighs for freedom; she for power."

Mr. Bolingbroke did not comply with his wife's request, or rather with her injunction, to write *every post:* and when he did write, Griselda always found some fault with his letters. They were too short, too stiff, or too cold, and "very different indeed," she said "from what he used to write before he was married." This was certainly true; and absence was not at the present crisis the most advantageous thing possible to our heroine. Absence is said to extinguish a weak flame, and to increase a strong one. Mr. Bolingbroke's

broke's passion for his Griselda had, by some means, been of late diminished. He parted from her with the disagreeable impression of a dispute upon his mind. As he went farther from her he perceived that, instead of dragging a lengthened chain, his chain grew lighter. His uncle recovered; he found agreeable society in the neighbourhood; he was persuaded to prolong his stay; his mind, which had been continually harassed, now enjoyed some tranquillity. On an unlucky evening, he recollected Martial's famous epigram and his wife, in one and the same instant:

"My mind still hovering round about you,
"I thought I could not live without you;
"But now we have lived three weeks asunder,
"How I lived with you is the wonder."

In

In the mean time, our heroine's chief amusement, in her husband's absence, was writing to complain of him to Mrs. Nettleby. This lady's answers were now filled with a reciprocity of conjugal abuse; she had found, to her cost, that it is the most desperate imprudence to marry a fool, in the hopes of governing him. All her powers of tormenting were lost upon her blessed help-mate. He was not to be moved by wit or sarcasm, eloquence or noise, tears or caresses, reason, jealousy, or the opinion of the world.

What did he care what the world thought; he would do as he pleased himself; he would be master in his own house: it did not signify talking or crying, or being in the right; right or

wrong, he would be obeyed; a wife should never govern him; he had no notion of letting a woman rule, for his part; women were born to obey, and promised it in church. As to jealousy, let his wife look to that; if she did not choose to behave properly, he knew his remedy, and would as soon be divorced as not. "Rule a wife and have a wife" was the burden of his song.

It was in vain to goad his insensible nature, in hopes of obtaining any good: vain as the art said to be possessed by Linnæus, of producing pearls by pricking oysters. Mrs. Nettleby, the witty, the spirited widow Nettleby, was now in the most hopeless and abject condition; tyrannized over by a dunce, and

who

who could pity her? not even her dear Griselda.

One day, Mrs. Bolingbroke received an epistle of seven pages from *poor* Mrs. Nettleby, giving a full and true account of Mr. Nettleby's extraordinary obstinacy about "the awning of a pleasure-boat, which he would not suffer to be made according to her directions, and which consequently caused the oversetting of the boat, and *very nearly* the deaths of all the party." Tired with the long history, and with the notes upon the history of this adventure, in Mrs. Nettleby's declamatory style, our heroine walked out to refresh herself. She followed a pleasant path in a field near the house, and came to a shady

lane, where she heard Mr. and Mrs. Granby's voices. She went towards the place. There was a turn in the lane, and a thick hedge of hawthorn prevented her from being immediately seen. As she approached, she heard Mr. Granby saying to Emma, in the fondest tone of affection.

My dear Emma, pray let it be done the way that you like best.

They were looking at a cottage which they were building. The masons had, by mistake, followed the plan which Mr. Granby proposed, instead of that which Emma had suggested. The wall was half built; but Mr. Granby desired that it might be pulled down, and altered to suit Emma's taste.

Bless

Bless me! cried Griselda, with great surprise, are you really going to have it pulled down, Mr. Granby?

Certainly; replied he, and what is more, I am going to help to pull it down.

He ran to assist the masons, and worked with a degree of zeal, which increased Mrs. Bolingbroke's astonishment.

Good heavens!—He could not do more for you if you were his mistress.

He never did so much for me, till I was his wife, said Emma.

That's strange!—Very unlike other men. But, my dear, said Mrs. Bolingbroke, taking Mrs. Granby's arm, and drawing her aside,—How did you ac

quire such surprising power over your husband ?

By not desiring it, I believe, replied Emma, smiling. I have never used any other art.

CHAP. XIV.

" Et cependant avec toute sa diablerie,
" Il faut que je l'apelle & mon cœur & ma
" mie."

Our heroine was still meditating upon the extraordinary method by which Emma had acquired power over her husband, when a carriage drove down the lane, and Mr. Bolingbroke's head appeared looking out of the chaise window. His face did not express so much joy as she thought it ought to display at the sight of her, after three weeks absence. She was vexed, and received him coldly. He turned to Mr.

and Mrs. Granby, and was not miserable. Griselda did not speak one word during their walk home; still her husband continued in good spirits: she was more and more out of humour, and took no pains to conceal her displeasure. He bore it well, but then he seemed to feel it so little, that she was exasperated beyond measure; she seized the first convenient opportunity, when she found him alone, of beginning a direct attack.

This is not the way in which you *used* to meet me, after an absence ever so short. He replied, that he was really very glad to see her; but that she, on the contrary, seemed sorry to see him.

Because you are quite altered now, continued she, in a querulous tone. I always

always prophesied, that you would cease to love me.

Take care, my dear, said he, smiling, some prophecies are the cause of their own accomplishment,—the sole cause. Come, my Griselda, continued he, in a serious tone, do not let us begin to quarrel the moment we meet. He offered to embrace her, but she drew back haughtily. What do you confess that you no longer love me? cried she.

Far from it; but it is in your own power, said he, hesitating—to diminish or increase my love.

Then it is no love, if it can be either increased or diminished, cried she; it is no love worth having. I remember the day when you swore to me, that

you affection could not be increased or diminished.

I was *in* love in those days, my dear, and did not know what I swore, said Mr. Bolingbroke, endeavouring to tur the conversation; never reproach a man, when he is sober, with what he said when he was drunk.

Then you are sober now, are you? cried she, angrily.

It is to be hoped I am, said he—laughing.

Cruel! barbarous man! cried she.

For being sober? said he; have not you been doing all you could to sober me these eighteen months, my dear? and now do not be angry if you have, in some degree, succeeded.

Succeeded!—Oh wretched woman!

this

this is thy lot! exclaimed Griselda, clasping her hands in an agony of passion;—Oh that my whole unfortunate sex could *see* me,—could *hear* you at this instant! Never, never did the love of man endure one twelvemonth after marriage. False! treacherous! callous! perjured tyrant! leave me! leave me!

He obeyed; she called him back, with a voice half suffocated with rage, but he returned not.

Never was departing love recalled by the voice of reproach. It is not, as the poet fables, at the sight of human ties, that Cupid is frightened, for he is blind; but he has the most delicate ears imaginable, scared at the sound of female objurgation, Love claps his wings and urges his irrevocable flight.

Griselda

Griselda remained for some time in her apartment, to indulge her ill-humour; she had leisure for this indulgence; she was not now, as formerly, disturbed by the fond interruptions of a husband. Longer had her angry fit lasted, but for a circumstance, which may to many of our readers appear unnatural: our heroine became hungry. The passions are more under the control of the hours of meals*, than any one, who has not observed human life out of novels, can easily believe. Dinner time came, and Mrs. Bolingbroke appeared at dinner as usual. In the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Granby, pride compelled Griselda to command her-

* De Retz' Memoirs.

self, and no one could guess what had passed between her and her husband: but no sooner was she again tête à tête with him, than her reproaches recommenced with fresh violence.—Will you only do me the justice to tell me Mr. Bolingbroke, cried she, what reason you have to love me less?

Reason, my dear, said he, you know love is independant of reason; according to your own definition: love is involuntary, you cannot therefore blame me for its caprices.

Insulting casuistry! said she, weeping; sophistical nonsense! Have you any rational complaint to make against me, Mr. Bolingbroke?

I make no complaints, rational or irrational,

irrational, my dear; they are all on your side.

And well they may be, cried Griselda, when you treat me in such a barbarous manner: but I do not complain; the world shall be my judge; the world will do me justice, if you will not. I appeal to every body who knows me, have I ever given you the slightest cause for ill usage? Can you accuse me of any extravagance, of any imprudence, Sir?

I accuse you of neither, Mrs. Bolingbroke.

No, because you cannot, Sir; my character, my fidelity, is unimpeached, unimpeachable; the world will do me justice.

Griselda contrived to make even her virtues

virtues causes of torment. Upon the strength of this unimpeachable fidelity, she thought she might be as ill-humoured as she pleased; she seemed now to think that she had acquired an indefeasible right to reproach her husband, since she had extorted from him the confession that he loved her less, and that he had no crime to lay to her charge. Ten days passed on in this manner; the lady becoming every hour more irritable, the gentleman every hour more indifferent.

To have revived or killed affection *secundum artem*, the fair practitioner should now have thrown in a little jealousy: but unluckily she was so situated, that this was impossible. No

object

object any way fit for the purpose, was at hand; nothing was to be found within ten miles of her, but honest country squires, and

" With all the powers of nature and of art,
" She could not break one stubborn country
" heart."

CHAP.

CHAP. XV

" To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
" As one who loves and some unkindness meets,
" With sweet austere composure thus replies."

MANY privileges are, and ought to be, allowed to the virgin majesty of the sex; and even when the modern fair one does not reply with all the sweet austere composure of Eve, her anger may have charms for a lover. There is a certain susceptibility of temper, that sometimes accompanies the pride of virtue, which indicates a quick sense of shame, and warm feelings of affection; in whatsoever manner this may be

 shown,

shown, it appear amiable and graceful. And if this sensibility degenerate into irritability, a lover pardons it in his mistress; it is her prerogative to be haughty; and if he be dexterous to seize " the moment of returning love," it is often his interest to promote quarrels, for the sake of the pleasures of reconciliation. The jealous doubts, the alternate hopes and fears, attendant on the passion of love, are dear to the lover whilst his passion lasts; but when that subsides, as subside it must, his taste for altercation ceases. The proverb, which favours the quarrels of lovers, may prove fatal to the happiness of husbands: and woe be to the wife who puts her faith in it. There are, however, people, who would extend that dan-

dangerous maxim even to the commerce of friendship; and it must be allowed (for morality neither in small matters nor great can gain any thing by suppressing the truth) it must be allowed that in the commencement of an intimacy, the quarrels of friends may tend to increase their mutual regard, by affording to one or both of them opportunities of displaying qualities superior even to good humour; such as truth, fidelity, honour or generosity. But whatever may be the sum total of their merit, when upon long acquaintance it comes to be fully known and justly appreciated, the most splendid virtues or talents can seldom compensate in domestic life for the want of temper. The fallacy of a maxim, like the ab-

surdity of an argument, is sometimes best proved, by pushing it as far as it can go, by observing all its consequences. Our heroine, in the present instance, illustrates this truth to admiration: her life and her husband's had now become a perpetual scene of disputes and reproaches; every day the quarrels grew more bitter, and the reconciliations less sweet.

One morning, Griselda and her husband were present, whilst Emma was busy, showing some poor children how to plait straw for hats.

Next summer, my dear, when we are settled at home, I hope you will encourage some manufacture of this kind, amongst the children of our tenants, said Mr. Bolingbroke to his lady.

I have

I have no genius for teaching manufactures of this sort, replied Mrs. Bolingbroke, scornfully.

Her husband urged the matter no farther. A few minutes afterwards, he drew out a straw from a bundle, which one of the children held.

This is a fine straw, said he, carelessly.

Fine straw! cried Mrs. Bolingbroke: no, that is very coarse. This, continued she pulling one from another bundle; this is fine straw if you please.

I think mine is the finest, said Mr. Bolingbroke.

Then you must be blind Mr. Bolingbroke, cried the lady, eagerly comparing them.

Well my dear, said he, laughing, we will not dispute about straws.

No indeed said she, but I observe whenever you know you are in the wrong Mr. Bolingbroke, you say *we will not dispute my dear:* now pray look at these straws Mrs. Granby, you that have eyes, which is the finest?

I will draw lots said Emma, taking one playfully from Mrs. Bolingbroke, for it seems to me that there is little or no difference between them.

No difference? Oh my dear Emma! said Mrs. Bolingbroke.

My dear Griselda, cried her husband, taking the other straw from her and blowing it away; indeed it is not worth

worth disputing about: this is too childish.

Childish! repeated she, looking after the straw, as it floated down the wind; I see nothing childish in being in the right: your raising your voice in that manner never convinces me. Jupiter is always in the wrong, you know, when he has recourse to his thunder.

Thunder! my dear Griselda! about a straw; well! when women are determined to dispute, it is wonderful how ingenious they are in finding subjects. I give you joy, my dear, of having attained the perfection of the art: you can now literally dispute about straws.

Emma insisted at this instant, upon having an opinion about the shape of a hat, which she had just tied under the

chin of a rosy little girl of six year old; upon whose smiling countenance, she fixed the attention of the angry lady.

All might now have been well, but Griselda had a pernicious habit of recurring to any slight words of blame, which had been used by her friends. Her husband had congratulated her upon having attained the perfection of the art of disputing, since she could cavil about straws. This reproach rankled in her mind. There are certain diseased states of the body, in which the slightest wound festers, and becomes incurable. It is the same with the mind; and our heroine's was in this dangerous predicament.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

" Que suis je?—qu'ai je fait? Que dois je
" faire encore?
" Quel transport me saisit? Quel chagrin me
" dévore?"

Some hours after the quarrel about the straws, when her husband had entirely forgotten it, and was sitting very quietly in his own apartment writing a letter, Griselda entered the room with a countenance prepared for great exploits.

Mr. Bolingbroke, she began in an aweful tone of voice, if you are at leisure to attend to me, I wish to speak

to

to you upon a subject of some importance.

I am quite at leisure, my dear, pray sit down; what is the matter? you really alarm me!

It is not my intention to alarm you Mr. Bolingbroke, continued she, in a still more solemn tone; the time is past when what I have to say could have alarmed: I am persuaded, that you will now hear it without emotion, or with an emotion of pleasure.

She paused; he laid down his pen, and looked all expectation.

I am come to announce to you a fixed, unalterable resolution—To part from you Mr. Bolingbroke.

Are you serious my dear?

Perfectly serious, Sir.

These words did not produce the revolution in her husband's countenance which Griselda had expected. She trembled with a mixed indescribable emotion of grief and rage, when she heard him calmly reply:

Let us part then Griselda, if that be your wish; but let me be sure that it is your wish: I must have it repeated from your lips, when you are perfectly calm.

With a voice inarticulate from passion, Griselda began to assure him, that she was perfectly calm; but he stopped her, and mildly said,

Take four and twenty hours to consider of what you are about Griselda; I will be here at this time to morrow to learn your final determination.

Mr.

Mr. Bolingbroke left the room.

Mrs. Bolingbroke was incapable of thinking; she could only feel. Conflicting passions assailed her heart. All the woman rushed upon her soul: she loved her husband more at this instant, than she had ever loved him before. His firmness excited at once her anger and her admiration. She could not believe that she had heard his *words rightly*. She sat down to recall minutely every circumstance of what had just passed, every word, every look; she finished, by persuading herself, that his calmness was affected, that the best method she could possibly take, was by a show of resistance to bully him out of his indifference. She little knew what she hazarded: when the danger of losing her

her husband's love was imaginary, and solely of her own creating, it affected her in the most violent manner; but now that the peril was real and imminent, she was insensible to its existence.

A celebrated traveller in the Alps, advises people to imagine themselves walking amidst precipices, when they are safe upon smooth ground; and he assures them that by this practice, they may inure themselves so to the idea of danger, as to prevent all sense of it in the most perilous situations.

The four and twenty hours passed: and at the appointed moment, our heroine and her husband met. As she entered the room, she observed that he held a book in his hand, but was not reading:

reading : he put it down ; rose deliberately, and placed a chair for her, in silence.

I thank you, I would rather stand, said she; he put aside the chair, and walked to a door at the other end of the room, to examine whether there was any one in the adjoining apartment.

It is not necessary that what we have to say, should be overheard by servants, said he.

I have no objection to being overheard, said Griselda, I have nothing to say of which I am ashamed, and all the world must know it soon.

As Mr. Bolingbroke returned towards her, she examined his countenance with an inquisitive eye. It was expressive of concern; grave--but calm.

She

She was decided in opinion that the calm was affected. She little knew the truth.

Who ever has seen a balloon—The reader, however impatient, must listen to this allusion—Whoever has seen a balloon, may have observed, that in it's flaccid state, it can be folded and unfolded with the greatest ease, and it is manageable even by a child; but when once filled, the force of multitudes cannot restrain, nor the art of man direct it's course. Such is the human mind—so tractable before, so ungovernable after it fills with passion. By slow degrees, unnoticed by our heroine, the balloon had been filling. It was full; but it was yet held down by strong cords:

cords: it remained with her to cut or not to cut them.

Reflect before you speak, my dear Griselda, said her husband; consider that on the words which you are going to pronounce, depend your fate and mine.

I have reflected sufficiently, said she, and decide Mr. Bolingbroke—to part.

Be it so, cried he, fire flashed from his eyes; he grew red and pale in an instant. Be it so, repeated he, in an irrevocable voice——We part for ever.

He vanished, before Griselda could speak or think. She was breathless; her limbs trembled; she could not support herself; she sunk she knew not where. She certainly loved her husband, better than any thing upon earth,

except

except power. When she came to her senses, and perceived that she was alone, she felt as if she was abandoned by all the world. The dreadful word for ever, still sounded in her ears. She was tempted to yield her humour to her affection. It was but a momentary struggle; the love of sway prevailed. When she came more fully to herself, she recurred to the belief, that her husband could not be in earnest, or at least that he would never persist, if she had but the courage to brave him to the utmost.

CHAP. XVII.

" L'ai je vu se troubler, et me plaindre un
" moment ?
" En ai je pu tirer un seul gémissement ?"

ASHAMED of her late weakness, our heroine rallied all her spirits, and resolved to meet her husband at supper with an undaunted countenance. Her provoking composure was admirably prepared ; but it was thrown away, for Mr. Bolingbroke did not appear at supper. When Griselda retired to rest, she found a note from him upon her dressing table ; she tore it open with a triumphant

triumphant hand, certain that it came to offer terms of reconciliation.

" You will appoint whatever friend you think proper, to settle the terms of our separation. The time I desire to be as soon as possible. I have not mentioned what has passed to Mr. or Mrs. Granby; you will mention it to them or not, as you think fit. On this point, as on all others, you will henceforward follow your own discretion.

T. Bolingbroke.

Twelve o'clock,
Saturday, Aug. 10th.

Mrs. Bolingbroke read and reread this note, weighed every word, examined every letter, and at last exclaimed aloud,—He will not, cannot

part from me. As she looked in the glass, she saw her maid standing in waiting; I shall not want you to night; you need not wait, cried she. The maid retired, full of what she had just heard. Too intent upon her own thoughts to observe even this, she continued her reverie, fixed to the spot on which she stood.

He cannot be in earnest, thought she. Either he is acting a part, or he is in a passion. Perhaps he is instigated by Mr. Granby: No, that cannot be, because he says he has not mentioned it to Mr. or Mrs. Granby, and he always speaks truth. If Emma had known it, she would have prevented him from writing such a harsh note, for she is such a good creature. I have a great

mind

mind to consult her; she is so indulgent, so soothing. But what does Mr. Bolingbroke say about her? He leaves me to my own discretion, to mention what has past or not. That means, mention it, speak to Mrs. Granby, that she may advise you to submit. I will not say a word to her; I will outgeneral him yet. He cannot leave me, when it comes to the trial.

She sat down and wrote instantly this answer to her husband's note.

"I agree with you entirely, that the sooner we part the better. I shall write to morrow to my friend Mrs. Nettleby, with whom I choose to reside. Mr. John Nettleby is the person I fix upon to settle the terms of our separation. In three days I shall have Mrs. Nettleby's

answer. This is Saturday, on Tuesday then we part—for ever.

GRISELDA BOLINGBROKE.

Mrs. Bolingbroke summoned her maid. "Deliver this note," said she, "with your own hand; do not send le Grand with it to his master."

Griselda waited impatiently for her maid's return.

No answer, Madam.

No answer! Are you certain?

Certain, Ma'am: my master only said "Very well."

And why did not you ask him if there was any answer?

I did, Ma'am. I said, Is there no answer for my lady? No answer, said he.

Was he up?

No

No, Ma'am, he was in bed.

Was he asleep when you went in?

I cannot say positively, Ma'am: he undrew the curtain as I went in, and asked, "Who's there?"

Did you go in on tiptoe?

I forget really, Ma'am.

You forget really! Ideot!

But, Ma'am, I recollect he turned his head to go to sleep as I closed the curtain.

You need not wait, said Mrs. Bolingbroke.

Provoked beyond the power of sleep, Mrs. Bolingbroke rose, and gave free expression to her feelings, in an eloquent letter to Mrs. Nettleby: but even after this relief, Griselda could not rest, so much was she disturbed by the repose

that her husband enjoyed, or was reputed to enjoy. In the morning, she placed her letter in full view upon the mantlepiece in the drawing room, in hopes that it would strike terrour into the heart of her husband. To her great mortification, she saw Mr. Bolingbroke, with an unchanged countenance, give it to the servant, who came to ask for "Letters for the post." She had now three days of grace, before Mrs. Nettleby's answer could arrive; but of these she disdained to take advantage: she never mentioned what had passed to Mrs. Granby, but persisted in the same haughty conduct towards her husband, persuaded that she should conquer at last.

The third day came, and brought an

answer

answer from Mrs. Nettleby. After a prodigious parade of professions, a decent display of astonishment at Mr. Bolingbroke's strange conduct, and pity for her dear Griselda, Mrs. Nettleby came to the point, and " was sorry to say, that Mr. Nettleby was in one of his obstinate fits, and could not be brought to listen to the scheme, so near her heart : he would have nothing to do, he said, with settling the terms of Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke's separation, not he! He absolutely refuses to meddle between man and wife; and calls it meddling, continued Mrs. Nettleby, to receive you as an inmate, after you have parted from your husband. Mr. Bolingbroke, he says, has always been very civil to him, and came to see him in town ;

town; therefore he will not encourage Mrs. Bolingbroke in her tantarums. I represented to him, that Mr. B. desires the thing, and leaves the choice of a residence to yourself; but Mr. Nettleby replied, in his brutal way, that you might choose a residence where you would, except in his house: that his house was his castle, and should never be turned into an asylum for runagate wives: that he would not set such an example to his own wife, &c. But, continued Mrs. Nettleby, you can imagine all the foolish things he said, and I need not repeat them, to vex you and myself. I know that he refuses to receive you, my dear Mrs. Bolingbroke, on purpose to provoke me. But what can one do or say to such a man?—

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear. Pray write when you are at leisure, and tell me how things are settled, or rather what is settled upon you; which, to be sure, is now the only thing that you have to consider.

Ever yours, affectionately,

R. H. NETTLEBY.

P. S. Before you leave Devonshire, do, my dear, get me some of the fine Devonshire lace; three or four dozen yards will do. I trust implicitly to your taste. You know I do not mind the price; only let it be broad, for narrow lace is my aversion."

CHAP. XVIII.

"Lost is the dear delight of giving pain!"

MORTIFIED by her dear friend's affectionate letter and postscript, Griselda was the more determined to persist in her resolution to brave her husband to the utmost. The catastrophe, she thought, would always be in her own power; she recollected various separation scenes in novels and plays, where the lady, after having tormented her husband or lover by every species of ill-conduct, reforms in an instant, and a reconciliation is effected by some miraculous means. Our heroine had seen

lady

lady Townly admirably well acted, and doubted not that she could now perform her part victoriously. With this hope, or rather in this confidence, she went in search of Mr. Bolingbroke. He was not in the house; he had gone out to take a solitary walk. Griselda hoped that she was the object of his reflections, during his lonely ramble.

Yes, said she to herself, my power is not exhausted; I shall make his heart ache yet: and when he yields, how I will revenge myself!

She rang for her woman, and gave orders to have every thing immediately prepared for her departure. As soon as the trunks are packed, let them be corded, and placed in the great hall, said she.

Our

Our heroine, who had a happy memory, full well recollected the effect which the sight of the corded trunks produced in the Simple Story, and she thought the stroke so good, that it would bear repetition. With malice prepense, she therefore prepared the blow, which she flattered herself could not fail to astound her victim. Her pride still revolted from the idea of consulting Mrs. Granby; but some apology was requisite for thus abruptly quitting her house. Mrs. Bolingbroke began in a tone that seemed intended to preclude all discussion.

Mrs. Granby, do you know that Mr. Bolingbroke and I have come to a resolution to be happy the rest of our lives; and for this purpose, we find it

expedient

expedient to separate. Do not start or look so shocked, my dear. This word separation, may sound terrible to some people, but I have, thank Heaven! sufficient strength of mind to hear it with perfect composure. When a couple, who are chained together, pull different ways, the sooner they break their chain the better. I shall set out immediately for Weymouth. You will excuse me my dear Mrs. Granby, you see the necessity of the case.

Mrs. Granby, with the most delicate kindness, began to expostulate, but Griselda declared that she was incapable of using a friend so ill, as to pretend to listen to advice, when her mind was determined irrevocably. Emma had no intention, she said, of obtruding her

her advice, but she wished that Mrs. Bolingbroke would give her own excellent understanding time to act, and that she would not throw away the happiness of her life in a fit of passion. Mrs. Bolingbroke protested that she never was freer from passion of every sort, than she was at this moment. With an unusually placid countenance, she turned from Mrs. Granby and sat down to the pianoforte. We shall not agree if I talk any more upon this subject, continued she, therefore I had better sing. I believe my music is better than my logic: at all events I prefer music.

In a fine *bravura* style Griselda then began to sing,

"What have I to do with thee,
"Dull unjoyous constancy, &c." And

And afterwards she played all her gayest airs to convince Mrs. Granby that her heart was quite at ease. She continued playing for an unconscionable time, with the most provoking perseverance.

Emma stood at the window, watching for Mr. Bolingbroke's return. " Here comes Mr. Bolingbroke!—How melancholy he looks!—Oh, my dear Griselda, cried she, stopping Mrs. Bolingbroke's hand as it ran gayly over the keys, this is no time for mirth or bravado, let me conjure you——

I hate to be conjured, interrupted Griselda, breaking from her; I am not a child, to be coaxed and kissed and sugar-plummed into being good, and behaving prettily. Do me the favour to let Mr. Bolingbroke know, that I am in

the study, and desire to speak to him for one minute.

No power could detain the peremptory lady: she took her way to the study, and rejoiced as she crossed the hall, to see the trunks placed as she had ordered. It was impossible that her husband could avoid seeing them the moment he should enter the house. —What a satisfaction!——Griselda seated herself at ease in an arm chair, in the study, and took up a book which lay open on the table. Mr. Bolingbroke's pencil-case was in it, and the following passage was marked:

" Il y a un lieu sur la terre où les joies pures sont inconnues; d'où la politesse est exilée et fait place à l'égoïsme, à la contradiction, aux injures à demi-

voilées;

voilées ; le remords et l'inquiétude, furies infatigables, y tourmentent les habitans. Ce lieu est la maison de deux époux qui ne peuvent ni s'estimer, ni s'aimer."

" Il y a un lieu sur la terre où le vice ne s'introduit pas, où les passions tristes n'ont jamais d'empire, où le plaisir et l'innocence habitent toujours ensemble, où les soins sont chers, où les travaux sont doux, où les peines s'oublient dans les entretiens, où l'on jouit du passé, du present, de l'avenir ; et c'est la maison de deux époux qui s'aiment *.

A pang of remorse seized Griselda, as she read these words ; they seemed

* M. de Saint Lambert, Œuvres philosophiques, tome 2.

to have been written on purpose for her. Struck with the sense of her own folly, she paused,—she doubted ;—but then she thought that she had gone too far to recede. Her pride could not bear the idea of acknowledging that she had been wrong, or of seeking reconcilement.

" I could live very happily with this man, but then to yield the victory to him!—and to reform!——No, no,—all reformed heroines are stupid and odious."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

"And, vanquish'd, quit victoriously the field."

GRISELDA flung the book from her, as her husband entered the room.

You have had an answer, Madam, from your friend Mrs. Nettleby, I perceive, said he, calmly.

I have, Sir. Family reasons prevent her from receiving me at present; therefore I have determined upon going to Weymouth, where, indeed, I always wished to spend this summer.

Mr. Bolingbroke evinced no surprise, and made not the slightest opposition. Mrs. Bolingbroke was so much vexed, that

that she could scarcely command her countenance: she bit her lip violently.

With respect to any arrangements that are to be made, I am to understand that you wish me to address myself to Mr. John Nettleby, said her husband.

No, to myself if you please; I am prepared to listen, Sir, to whatever you may have to propose.

These things are always settled best in writing, replied Mr. Bolingbroke. Be so obliging to leave me your direction, and you shall hear from me, or from Mrs. Granby, in a few days.

Mrs. Bolingbroke hastily wrote a direction upon a card, and put it into her husband's hand, with as much unconcern as she could maintain. Mr. Bolingbroke

Bolingbroke continued precisely in the same tone.

If you have any thing to suggest, that may contribute to your future convenience, Madam, you will be so good as to leave a memorandum with me, to which I shall attend.

He placed a sheet of paper before Mrs. Bolingbroke, and put a pen into her hand. She made an effort to write, but her hand trembled so that she could not form a letter. Her husband took up Saint Lambert, and read, or seemed to read.——Open the window, Mr. Bolingbroke, said she;——He obeyed, but did not as formerly, "hang over her enamoured." He had been so often duped by her fainting fits and hysterics, that now, when she suffered in earnest,

he

he suspected her of artifice. He took up his book again, and marked a page with his pencil. She wrote a line with a hurried hand, then starting up, flung her pen from her and exclaimed——— I need not, will not write; I have no request to make to you, Mr. Bolingbroke; do what you will; I have no wishes, no wish upon earth——but to leave you.

That wish will be soon accomplished, Madam, replied he, unmoved.

She pulled the bell till it broke.—A servant appeared.

My carriage to the door directly, if you please, Sir, cried she.

A pause ensued,—Griselda sat swelling with unutterable rage.—Heavens! have you no feeling left?—exclaimed

she, snatching the book from his hand. —Have you no feeling left, Mr. Bolingbroke, for any thing?

You have left me none for some things, Mrs. Bolingbroke, and I thank you. All this would have broken my heart, six months ago.

You have no heart to break, cried she.——The carriage drove to the door.

One word more, before I leave you for ever, Mr. Bolingbroke, continued she.—Blame yourself, not me, for all this.—When we were first married, you humoured, you spoiled me; no temper could bear it.—Take the consequences of your own weak indulgence.—— Farewell.

He made no effort to retain her, and she left the room.

——————" Thus it shall befall
" Him who to worth in woman overtrusting
" Lets her will rule; restraint she will not
" brook,
" And left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
" She first his *weak indulgence* will accuse."

A confused recollection of this warning of Adam's was in Mr. Bolingbroke's head at this moment.

Mrs. Bolingbroke's carriage drove by the window, and she kissed her hand to him as she passed. He had not sufficient presence of mind to return the compliment. Our heroine enjoyed this last triumph of superior temper.

Whether the victory was worth the winning, whether the modern Griselda persisted in her spirited sacrifice of happiness, whether she was ever reconciled to her husband, or whether the

fear

fear of reforming and growing stupid prevailed, are questions which we leave to the sagacity or the curiosity of her fair contemporaries.

" He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
" Let him now speak, 'tis charity to shew."

THE END.

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